

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 265584

EXDIS MILITARY ADDEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

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EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS SECDEF, JCS, CINCPAC, CINCPACAF, CSAF

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TAGS: PFOR, MARR, TH

SUBJ: U.S. FORCE REDUCTIONS IN THAILAND - NEGOTIATING
INSTRUCTIONS

REF: (A) STATE 265537; (B) STATE 265541

1. EMBASSY IS MOST APPRECIATIVE OF WASHINGTON'S
PROMPT RESPONSE TO OUR REQUEST FOR DRAWDOWN DETAILS,
AND FOR CLARIFICATION OF CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE
RESIDUAL U.S. PRESENCE.

2. AS SOME ELEMENTS NEW TO US HAVE EMERGED, WE OFFER
THE FOLLOWING:

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(A) REF B, PARA 3G, REQUIREMENT TO RETAIN A U.S.

CAPABILITY FOR A STORAGE FACILITY AT UTAPAO FOR WAR RESERVE AIR MUNITIONS. THE RTG WOULD UNQUESTIONABLY WANT TO KNOW THE REASONS FOR THIS REQUIREMENT, THUS OPENING THE ENTIRE QUESTION OF REENTRY RIGHTS FOR U.S. COMBAT FORCES, WHICH THE RTG IS NOT PREPARED TO CONSIDER AT THIS TIME. MOREOVER, OUR UNDERSTANDING FROM U.S. MILITARY SOURCES IS THAT THE CONTINGENCY FOR THE WAR RESERVE AIR MUNITIONS IS AN OVERT CHINESE ATTACK ON THAILAND. THIS DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE A REALISTIC CONTINGENCY. WE URGE THAT THIS NON-SALEABLE REQUIREMENT WHICH CANNOT BE MANAGED INCONSPICUOUSLY AND FOR WHICH PACAF ESTIMATES A PERSONNEL LEVEL OF ALMOST 200 AIRMEN BE DROPPED.

(B) REF A, PARAS 7 AND 11, MANPOWER. THE FIGURES WITH WHICH WE ARE DEALING (RESIDUAL FORCE OF NO MORE THAN 3,000; RETROGRADE FORCE CEILING OF 1,000) ARE LARGER THAN THE RTG EXPECTS. WERE WE TO SURFACE THEM, EVEN AS CEILINGS, WE WOULD FIND OURSELVES CONFRONTED WITH THAI COUNTERPROPOSALS WHICH WOULD IN ALL LIKELIHOOD BE MUCH LOWER, BUT WHICH WOULD QUICKLY BECOME FIXED THAI POSITIONS. THE BEST WAY TO APPROACH THIS MATTER IS BY AVOIDING TOTAL RESIDUAL MANNING FIGURES AT THIS STAGE, IF POSSIBLE. INSTEAD, WE SHOULD DEAL WITH THE FUNCTIONS TO BE PERFORMED, WITH APPROPRIATE MANNING TO BE WORKED OUT LATER AT THE WORKING LEVEL. IN THIS WAY, THE FINAL FIGURES WILL EMERGE NATURALLY OVER A PERIOD OF SEVERAL MONTHS, AND THE THAI WILL BE MORE LIKELY TO ACCEPT WHAT WE NEED BY WAY OF MANPOWER ONCE THEY HAVE AGREED TO THE FUNCTIONS TO BE PERFORMED. IN OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE THAI, WE WILL NOT MINIMIZE THE ORDERS OF MAGNITUDE WE ARE TALKING ABOUT, AND AS INSTRUCTED WILL DISABUSE CHATCHAI OF HIS APPARENT NOTION THAT OUR ULTIMATE PRESENCE HERE WILL NUMBER ABOUT 500.

(C) REF B, PARA 3A, C-130'S. IN TALKING WITH OUR MILITARY COLLEAGUES HERE AND VISITORS FROM 13TH AF AND HQ PACAF, WE HAVE NOT RPT NOT BEEN ABLE TO ESTABLISH A BASIS FOR THE REQUIREMENT TO SUPPORT UP-COUNTRY SITES WITH C-130'S. WE WILL INCLUDE AIR SUPPORT FOR THE RESIDUAL PRESENCE IN OUR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE THAI AS INSTRUCTED, BUT WE BELIEVE C-130'S STATIONED AT UTAPAO SHOULD BE DROPPED FROM THE RESIDUAL

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PRESENCE, UNLESS A BETTER JUSTIFICATION CAN BE ESTABLISHED THAN WE ARE ABLE TO SEE SO FAR. THE PRESENCE HERE OF C-130'S AFTER MARCH 19, 1976 CAN, OF COURSE, BE JUSTIFIED FOR A WHILE ON THE GROUNDS THAT THEY ARE NEEDED FOR RETROGRADE OF MATERIEL.

3. REF B NOTES THAT WE ENVISION THE USE OF "A PORTION OF UTAPAO" FOR OUR RESIDUAL NEEDS, BUT REF A GIVES NO PARTICULARS ON A DRAWDOWN OF U.S. FORCES AND AIRCRAFT PRESENTLY AT UTAPAO

OR ON TURNOVER OF THE PORTION WE WILL CEASE TO USE. AS WE HAVE POINTED OUT BEFORE, COME MARCH 19, 1976, IT WILL HAVE TO APPEAR THAT THERE ARE NO U.S. BASES IN THAILAND. IN A FORMAL SENSE, THIS MEANS THAT WE WILL HAVE TO GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS OF LOWERING THE FLAG AND OSTENSIBLY TURNING UTAPAO OVER THE THE RTG JUST AS WE WILL HAVE DONE WITH UDORN AND KORAT. THIS DOES NOT IN ITSELF IMPLY ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR (EXCEPT A LOW PROFILE) AS FAR AS OUR SUBSEQUENT OPERATIONS AT UTAPAO ARE CONCERNED, BUT IT DOES MEAN THAT WE WILL HAVE TO GO THROUGH A PRO-FORMA TURN-OVER. WE WOQLD THINK MARCH 15 WOULD DO AS WELL AS ANY OTHER DATE FOR THIS PURPOSE. WE WILL ALSO NEED UTAPAO AIRCRAFT (E.G., KC-135) WITHDRAWAL GUIDANCE.

4. DEPARTMENT AND OTHER CONCERNED WASHINGTON AGENCIES CAN TAKE IT AS GIVEN THAT WE WILL CARRY OUT OUR INSTRUCTIONS FULLY AND TO THE BEST OF OUR ABILITY. WE WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO ADVISE THE DEPARTMENT WHEN A PARTICULAR ELEMENT OF THOSE INSTRUCTIONS SEEMS TO US UNWORKABLE OR THREATENS TO UNDERCUT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE OVERALL GOAL IN THE CURRENT NEGOTIATING CLIMATE IN THAILAND. IT IS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT WE URGE THAT A FLEXIBLE APPROACH BE MAINTAINED, PARTICULARLY ON THE QUESTION OF UTAPAO WHERE THE RESIDUAL ACTIVITIES WE WISH TO KEEP WILL HAVE TO BE TAILORED TO THAI POLITICAL IMPERATIVES.
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